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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO EAP: A/S HILL, T: U/S JOSEPH AND
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/10/2016
TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [MNUC](#) [KNNP](#) [CH](#) [KN](#) [KS](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: ROK TO ANNOUNCE POSITION ON PSI NOVEMBER 13, 2006

Classified By: CDA BILL STANTON. REASONS: 1.4 (b/d)

11. (S) On Saturday, November 11, Deputy Foreign Minister for Policy Planning and International Organizations, Park In-kook, met with the Charge and POL-MIL Chief to preview the following ROK announcement -- planned for release at 15:00 (Seoul Time) on November 13 -- on South Korea's participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).

BEGIN TEXT OF DRAFT STATEMENT

The Republic of Korea supports the purpose and principles of PSI and will adjust the scope of its participation in accordance with its own judgment. Taking into account the unique circumstances on the Korean Peninsula, the ROKG will decide on activities to be taken in waters surrounding the Korean Peninsula in accordance with relevant domestic and international laws.

END TEXT OF DRAFT STATEMENT

12. (S) DFM Park requested on behalf of his government that the USG welcome the announcement. Despite falling short of "endorsing" the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles, Park argued that it will in fact result in expanded participation by the ROK in PSI activities. He explained the statement was the product of an intense high-level domestic political debate resulting in internal compromise within the ROK government. According to Park, PSI had initially, and mistakenly, been portrayed to the Korean public as equating to a Cuban Missile Crisis-style blockade of North Korea. As a result, the ruling Uri Party was vehemently opposed to unconditional endorsement of PSI. Park assured the Charge that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade had argued in favor of endorsement, and that former Foreign Minister (now UN Secretary General-designate) Ban Ki-moon and new Foreign Minister-designate Song Min-soon had both expended significant amounts of political capital in a failed attempt to persuade party leaders to ease their opposition.

13. (S) Park informed the Charge that he planned to deliver the statement to the public on November 13. At the same time, he would also announce the content of the ROKG's report to the UN Security Council on implementation of UNSCR 1718, Park said, while the Ministry of Unification would publicly outline unilateral actions it would take in response to the DPRK July 4 missile launches and October 9 nuclear test.

Park revealed that all three announcements were to be formalized at a lunch hosted by the Prime Minister for key National Assembly figures later in the day.

14. (S) Park stressed the following points concerning the PSI announcement:

- The ROK leadership believes the statement is a "great concession."
- Ban Ki-moon and Song Min-soon both understood the USG would likely not be satisfied.
- MOFAT wished to coordinate with the USG to downplay publicly the gap in our respective positions.
- MOFAT requested the USG welcome the statement as "progress" but also "encourage fuller ROK participation" in PSI. MOFAT would be able to use this to continue to build support for PSI, Park said.
- Park strongly urged that Washington make no official statements claiming the ROK has "endorsed" PSI. That would make Song Min-soon vulnerable to accusations he had made a secret deal under-the-table with Washington, Park explained.

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- When asked by reporters why the ROK was not "endorsing" PSI, Park said he planned to stress that the ROKG position reflected its "special status" on the Korean Peninsula.

15. (S) Overall, Park claimed the ROK position would put South Korea "on the right track" toward eventual endorsement of PSI. "If the November 13 announcement is handled well by both capitals, President Roh can be further persuaded to move down that track," he said. Furthermore, the USG could fully trust Song Min-soon and MOFAT to ensure full ROK participation in PSI, Park asserted.

16. (S) COMMENT: Led by the Ambassador, Embassy has continued to press for full ROK participation in PSI, as did U/S Joseph during his November 7 visit to Seoul. The ROKG has clearly gotten the message, but the proposed statement appears to be the best they believe they can do for now. END COMMENT.
STANTON